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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## REPORT

# INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Bulgaria

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SUBJECT Composition of New Infantry Division

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1. The Bulgarian Army has reorganized its infantry divisions and has patterned them somewhat after the composition of the Soviet infantry division. They are actually a cross between Soviet and the Yugoslav infantry division.
2. The Infantry Division: The Bulgarian infantry division has approximately 12,000 officers and men and is broken down as follows:
  - a. Divisional Staff: Composed of the Divisional Commander, the Deputy Divisional Commander, Intelligence Officer, and the Commanders of the various assigned next lower units, which include the three Regimental Commanders, the Artillery Commander, the Engineer, Anti-Tank, and Anti-Aircraft Battalion Commanders. A Political Commissar is also attached to the Divisional Staff but is not under the jurisdiction and command of the Divisional Commanders; he reports directly to his headquarters in Sofia. There are various sections attached to the Staff, but their composition is not specifically known at this time.
  - b. Three Infantry Regiments: Composed of 3,000 officers and men each.
  - c. One Divisional Artillery Regiment: Composed completely of 105 mm horse-drawn guns. The 75 mm gun has been completely withdrawn. This divisional artillery does not use artillery observation planes and there is no provision for such planes in the tables of organization and equipment.
  - d. Engineer Battalion: Composed of a pontoon company which carries with it one section bridge (Bailey type).
  - e. Anti-Tank Battalion: This battalion possesses some 47 mm Russian guns and some German 88 mm guns. The exact armament proposed for this battalion is not known.
  - f. Anti-Aircraft Battalion: Composed of three batteries of six guns each. These guns are all 37 mm Russian Zenitka guns.
  - g. Divisional Hospital: The tables of organization and equipment calls for motorized ambulances, but to date all ambulances are horse-drawn.

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- h. Reconnaissance Squadron: This squadron is composed entirely of cavalymen and contains no mechanized section. Their function is to perform reconnaissance in force at the direction of the divisional commander.
- i. Supply Battalion (Oboz): This battalion contains the divisional workshops and all the transportation for divisional purposes. The tables of organization and equipment calls for the transportation company to be completely motorized, but 80 percent of the transportation is still horse-drawn.
- 3. The Infantry Regiment: The breakdown of the new infantry regiment, composed of approximately 3,000 officers and men, is as follows:
  - a. Regimental Staff: Composed of the Regimental Commander, usually a colonel, but in many regiments a major.
    - 1) Deputy Regimental Commander - who is the commanding officer of 1 Battalion.
    - 2) Aide de Camp - who is a lieutenant and acts as liaison officer between the regimental commander and any of his units.
    - 3) Regimental Chief of Staff (Nachalnik Shtab na Polka) - who is a general staff officer with the rank of captain and whose function is the planning of regimental operations. This position has been created because many of the battalion and regimental commanders are not graduates of the military academy and have had little experience in operational planning.
    - 4) Intelligence Officer - a first lieutenant who is attached to the staff to handle all intelligence matters. He has no intelligence section under his command.
    - 5) The commanding officer of the headquarters battalion who is a captain and sits on the staff if needed.
    - 6) The commanding officer of the supply company who is a lieutenant and sits on the staff if needed.
    - 7) The commanding officer of the communications section who is a lieutenant and sits on the staff if needed.
    - 8) The commanding officer of the regimental aid station (in the regimental supply company) who sits on the staff if needed.
  - b. Headquarters Battalion
  - c. Three Rifle Battalions
  - d. Supply and Transportation Company
- 4. Regimental Headquarters Battalion: This battalion is now called "Gruppa Za Komandvane" (Command Group) and the old term "Shtabna Droushina" (Headquarters Battalion) is no longer used. The composition of this headquarters battalion is as follows:
  - a. One Company Self-Propelled Artillery - called "Samohodna Orazhie" or "Samohodka": This company has seven self-propelled Zis full-tracked 76 mm guns. These guns are manned by sections of one driver and four gunners each. The company is divided into two sections of three guns each. The seventh gun is located in the headquarters section. The company is commanded by a captain and two other officers command each section. The guns can rotate on a 360° angle. At the present time there are 50 such guns in the Bulgarian Army. They are used for direct or indirect firing and each gun is furnished with 150 to 200 rounds. There are no spare parts available within the army for repairs.

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- b. One Heavy Mortar Battery - called "Tezhka Minohvurgachna Batareya": This battery is composed of four 122 mm heavy mortars. The prime movers for these mortars are two-wheeled horse-drawn carts. At the present time not all the regiments in the western and southern part of Bulgaria have been completely equipped with these mortars. This company has only one officer.
- c. One Anti-Aircraft Battery - called "Protivo Vuzdoushna Kartechna Batareya": This battery is composed of six anti-aircraft 12.7 mm machine guns. Each battery is furnished with 24,000 rounds. At the present time there are no reserve supplies of ammunition; it has all been distributed to existing units. As an example, the anti-aircraft battery in Gorna Dzhumaya has 24,000 rounds and the anti-aircraft battery in Petrich has 23,500 rounds. These figures were furnished by the anti-aircraft control officer of 7 Infantry Division.
- d. One Anti-Tank Battery - called "Protivo Tankova Batareya": This unit is composed of four 5 centimeter Rheinmetal guns, direct Russian copies of the German gun. The guns are mounted on full-tracked carriers with no armor on the structure; they can be dismounted as they are equipped with wheels and split trails. Each battery is commanded by one officer. Almost all such batteries have been fully equipped.
- e. Engineer and Reconnaissance Platoon - called "Antiminerno i Razouznavatelyen Zvod": This platoon is composed of two sections; a mine-sweeping and mine-laying section, equipped with horses and two carts and saddle packs for the horses, and one section of mounted infantrymen composed of eight to ten men for courier and liaison work upon the request of the regimental commander. All members of this platoon are armed with carbines.
- f. One Communications Platoon: Composed of two sections: a field telephone section which carries 20 kilometers of telephone wire with it; and a radio section with four 1½ radio sets of either Lorenz or local Bulgarian make. This section is supposed to furnish one portable radio set to each of the rifle battalions with the other set remaining at regimental headquarters. At the present time there are actually one or two sets in each regiment.
- g. There is a discussion at the present time of adding a battery of four infantry howitzers to each regimental headquarters battalion. To date no action to establish such batteries has been taken.
- 5. The Regimental Supply and Transportation Company: The regimental supply and transportation company (Oboz), is similar to a supply train with the addition of other elements and is broken down as follows:
  - a. Food Transportation Section: Is about equally divided between horse-drawn and automotive vehicles and is responsible for furnishing the combat battalions with food.
  - b. Ammunition Transportation Section: Likewise partially horse-drawn and motorized.
  - c. Regimental Aid Station: Composed of one doctor and several aid men and equipped with Skoda and Fenomen ambulances. It is envisaged that the aid men will be replaced shortly by women.
  - d. Technical Aid Section: Composed of non-commissioned officers who are trained to make necessary ordnance, signal, and automotive repairs, but who have no workshop or spare parts.
- 6. The Rifle Battalion: The rifle battalion is composed as follows:
  - a. One Headquarters Company: Formerly called "Shtabna Rota" and now renamed "Gruppa za Komandvane".
  - b. Three Rifle Companies

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- c. One Machine Gun Company: Designated as 4 Company within each battalion.
  - d. Supply Section: Called "Oboz" and consists of one officer and 60 men. The transportation within the supply section is entirely horse-drawn. This section comprises all the cooks and foodhandlers for the entire battalion. After food is prepared in the kitchens it is put into fireless cookers and carried down to the companies who have no personnel allocated for food handling. At the present time there are only sufficient fireless cookers for one out of every four battalions. This supply section also has an aid group composed of one doctor and several stretcher bearers. They have one horse-drawn ambulance per company for evacuation of wounded troops. There is no repair section and no spare parts for vehicles or weapons carried.
  - e. No attempt has been made to furnish anti-aircraft support organically within the battalion.
7. The Rifle Battalion Headquarters Company: The rifle battalion headquarters company is composed of the following elements:
- a. One Mortar Company: Composed of four officers and 60 men broken down into three platoons equipped with three 81 mm Rheinmetal mortars each. This company also has a command section of ten enlisted men.
  - b. One Anti-Tank Platoon: Composed of one officer and 27 men and equipment with four 47 mm anti-tank guns of Russian make. Each gun is manned by a crew of six men.
  - c. Communications Platoon: Composed of one officer and 30 men. This section carries approximately five kilometers of field telephone wire.
  - d. Automatic Weapons Company (half-company strength): This half company is composed of three officers and 60 men divided into two platoons of one officer and 30 men each. It is equipped with drum magazine sub-machine guns.
8. The Machine Gun Company: The machine gun company (4 Company of the Rifle Battalion) is composed of five officers and 132 men and is broken down as follows:
- a. Headquarters Section: Composed of one officer and ten to twelve men. In addition to their personal weapons they are equipped with two anti-tank rifles approximately 1.5 to 1.6 meters long which fire 14 mm armor-piercing bullets. This rifle has a muzzle brake. It has replaced the Solothurn 20 mm gun. The tables of organization and equipment calls for one radio set in the headquarters section.
  - b. Three Platoons: Composed of two sections each equipped with Maxim (Russian type) old model water-cooled machine guns. These machine guns have been reconditioned, however, and have been equipped with new barrels. (The old German machine gun Model 34 has been completely dispensed with; half of them were turned over to the Greek guerrillas. The other half was allegedly sent to Russia for use in the Far East.) There are two machine guns per section of 18 men and each gun crew is composed of nine men. These machine guns are mounted on two-wheeled carts with removable wheels for field action. Each platoon is composed of one officer and 36 men with an additional three men who act as runners. The Maxim machine guns fire belt ammunition with 150 rounds per belt. There are an additional 3,000 rounds for each machine gun carried in ammunition carts. Both the mounted machine guns and ammunition carts are horse-drawn.
9. The Rifle Company: The rifle company of the rifle battalion is composed of five officers and 160 men. It is commanded by a captain who has a deputy commander, a first lieutenant, who is also commander of the first platoon. The rifle company is broken down as follows:

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- a. Headquarters Section: The headquarters section has one officer and ten men. The men are equipped with carbines and in addition have two anti-tank rifles firing 14 mm armor-piercing bullets (same weapon as described in the headquarters section of the machine gun company). They likewise have a portable radio on their tables of organization and equipment, but there are none on hand at the present time. Among these headquarters section men are two aid men who are equipped with a collapsible stretcher and first aid kits.
  - b. Three Rifle Platoons: Each platoon is composed of three rifle squads. Each squad has 15 men with a sergeant in charge. Each has an automatic rifle which up to now, has been the Bren gun, but is being replaced by the Russian Dehtyarev, which has a drum magazine. Within each squad there are 14 rifles. At the present time 50 percent of the rifles are Trilineyna rifles and the other 50 percent are the old German Mannlicher rifles. The German rifles are being withdrawn as soon as new Russian rifles are received. Under combat conditions two or three sub-machine guns may be issued to each squad and a like number of rifles withdrawn. Platoon leaders and higher officers carry pistols.
  - c. In the new rifle company no organic supply section is furnished and they must rely on the battalion supply train.
10. Individual Equipment of the Soldier: Each soldier is furnished with the following items of equipment:
- a. Battle jacket and pants.
  - b. Overcoat.
  - c. Cloth cap.
  - d. High top shoes - Boots are being replaced in the army, by high top shoes. Most of the shoes are being produced in a factory at Gorna Banya which produces military shoes only, at a daily rate of 2,000 pairs. The army shoe depot is in Chelopechene, Sofia.
  - e. Helmet - The army has only 100,000 helmets (made in Czechoslovakia) and probably no new helmets will be obtained as the Russians are not exponents of the use of helmets.
  - f. First Aid Kit - Called "Lichen Prevurzocheh Paket". Composed of one strip of bandage and a non-medicated pad, it is covered with a rubberized cloth and sewed into the inside lower left front of the battle jacket.
  - g. Knapsack.
  - h. One day's rations - Composed of hardtack, tea and sugar.
  - i. Canteen - Few troops are presently equipped with canteens.
  - j. Aluminum pan - Used for food, soup, and any other items of ration. At the present time the army is short of mess gear.
  - k. Rifle with Bayonet Permanently Affixed - The bayonet is mounted on a hinge and when not in use the bayonet is bent back along the barrel.
  - l. Leather Cartridge Cases - Containing 80 to 100 rounds of ammunition.
  - m. Belt with Shoulder Straps.
  - n. Platoon leaders and company commanders are supposed to carry compasses. At the present time very few have been issued. Officers and non-commissioned officers who have command positions are issued binoculars. At the present time 15 percent of the officers and non-commissioned officers have been issued binoculars.

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- c. All equipment depots have been removed from Sofia and dispersed in small towns to prevent mass destruction of equipment by bombing.
11. Political Commissars: At the present time Political Commissars, or as they are called, "Instructional Guidance Officers" are assigned down to regimental level only. They are responsible for the indoctrination of the army, and visit each small unit within the regiment at least once a week in order to deliver political indoctrination speeches and to observe the political progress of the troops. It is envisaged that in wartime the political commissars will be assigned down to and including all battalions. The political commissars are responsible directly to their headquarters in Sofia and are not obligated to take any orders or suggestions from unit commanders. They may, however, instruct unit commanders to issue orders to delinquent units, who, in the eyes of the political commissar, are not properly "indoctrinated".
12. Transportation Within the Army: At the present time the Bulgarian Army is almost entirely re-equipped with Russian vehicles. There have been two types of vehicles brought in so far for general use: the Molotov, three-ton, two axle truck and the Zis (Ford-type, lighter truck). At the present time the army has 15,000 trucks. No spare parts have been brought in and all repairs must be made by cannibalizing.

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